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May 6, 2008

Dominion Virginia City Hybrid Energy Center
c/o Cindy M. Berndt
Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 1105
Richmond, VA 23218

Dear Air Pollution Control Board members,

Thank you for accepting authority over the permits for Dominion's proposed Virginia City power plant. I would like to raise concerns about the air quality measurements and the lack of appropriate public participation in the decision-making process up until this point.

I am concerned about the methods used to collect data on current air conditions in the region (data which is then used to model the effects of the proposed power plant's pollution.) How is this data collected? My understanding is that the data is extrapolated from readings taken in Roanoke. Given our region's much higher asthma rates than those in Roanoke coupled with the Carbo plant located about nine miles from the Virginia City plant, I suspect that our air conditions are markedly different from those found in Roanoke. Is it possible to monitor the actual air conditions in our region so that the models used in the permitting process will take into account localized weather patterns, our actual air quality, and inversions along the Clinch River?

From my own experience and from speaking with my friends and neighbors, I am also very concerned that intimidation and other factors have kept many individuals in the region from providing valuable input to the DEQ about the potential impacts of the power plant on our community. At the February 11 DEQ hearing in St. Paul, I believe that many people were prevented from speaking for the following reasons:

- Despite stated rules to the contrary, people in favor of the plant were allowed to hold signs and clap loudly during the proceedings.
- A line of large men holding pro-plant signs were standing just *inside* the entrance door to the hearing so that we were forced to walk by them as we entered and left. The DEQ facilitator appeared to be intimidated by this line of men --- although he asked them to sit down, he did not press the point. I know that I felt intimidated by having to run the gauntlet to enter and leave the hearing.
- Rules during the meeting seemed to be very flexible, designed to empower plant

proponents and disenfranchise opponents. Although I arrived at the meeting an hour and a half early, so many plant proponents had already signed up that no plant opponents got to speak until late the first night. Many opponents were not allowed to speak until the second night, and unsurprisingly many of them stayed home the next day given the unfairness and intimidation rampant at the proceedings.

The second DEQ hearing was handled no better. I personally called the DEQ office earlier that week to ask when we could sign up to speak and was told "between 4 and 5." Plant opponents had chosen to boycott the second hearing in protest of our poor treatment at the first hearing, but I was present to observe. When when I arrived at 3:30 pm (half an hour before the DEQ had stated sign up would occur), plant proponents were already signing up to speak and I noticed later that the strict three minute speaking limits which had been enforced at the first meeting were no longer in place when plant proponents spoke --- for example, Representative Bud Phillips spoke for over ten minutes.

I understand that your primary concern is the soundness of the science involved in the permitting process. However, I request that a second round of public hearings be held in St. Paul, one which gives us our legally mandated voice in the decision of this issue. Please ensure that sign up times are publicized and stuck to, that decorum is maintained inside the hearing chamber, and that speaking time limits are even across the board.

Thank you for your careful consideration of the effects that the proposed power plant will have on the lives of myself and my neighbors. I urge you to deny the permit for this plant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anna Marie Hess". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'A' and 'H'.

Anna Hess